

Name of the Library:

Queens Public Library

Address of Central Library:

89-11 Merrick Boulevard,
Jamaica, NY 11432
718-990-0700



Management:

Interim Director Thomas Galante

Mr. Galante was appointed interim director in 2003 and has been with the Library for the more than 18 years, most recently as Deputy Director for Finance and Administration. Mr. Galante was the Queens Library Business Manager from 1987 to 1995 and became the Assistant Library Director in 1995 until his appointment as Deputy Director.

Overview The Queens Borough Public Library serves a population of more than two million in the most ethnically diverse county in the United States. The Queens Borough Public library serves a population of 2.2 million from 63 locations plus 6 Adult Learning Centers. It has circulated more books and other library materials than any other library system in the country since 1994, and is the second largest public library in the U.S. in terms of size of collections

Facilities: In 1998 the Flushing library opened. The 76,000 square foot facility houses a branch library, an Adult Learning Center, the International Resource Center, a state-of-the-art auditorium and exhibit space. It is the busiest branch library in New York State.

Funding: Queens Library receives the majority of its operating expenses from the City of New York. In Fiscal Year 2003, total support was \$87 million: City of New York (86%); New York State (7%); the United States of America (2%) and the balance from contributions and other sources.

Technology: Queens Library has been a leader in using technology to improve both information delivery to customers and back-office operations. In 1978, Queens Library had New York's first computerized circulation system. Computer Output Microfilm (COM) catalogs supplanted the card catalog. Later, standalone CD-ROM catalogs became the norm. In 1990 a second generation circulation system was installed. With a newer data communications network, a few reference databases such as the World Book Encyclopedia were provided to the branches as early as 1991. In 1992, the circulation system was linked to a network of other, similar systems for the purpose of exchanging cataloging records.

The library's catalog became available on the Internet in May, 1993, and was accessible from anywhere in the world. In September, 1993 a text-based Online Patron Access Catalog (OPAC), dubbed InfoLinQ™, was installed in Central Library to test its feasibility. Support by the City Council made it possible to expand the OPAC system-wide, and in 1996, Internet access was available at every branch.

In 2000, the City Council allocated funds to upgrade equipment. As a result, library customers can access Queens Library's catalog and research databases from their homes, schools or offices; can take workshops in computer and software use can read a selection of electronic books ("e-books") in English or Chinese without ever coming into the library and more

In January 1999, the Cyber Center opened at the Central Library. It features 48 workstations for customer use, closing the gap between technology "haves" and "have-nots" in Queens. Partnering with corporations and foundations permitted expansion of this valuable service throughout the system. Grants from the Gates Foundation, for instance, funded the Far Rockaway Small Business Resource

Center which opened in 1997, as well as smaller Cyber Centers in the Laurelton, Steinway and other branches, which opened in 2000 and 2001. They are heavily used by customers.

Staff: In 1995, Queens Public Library began a strategic planning process. The process incorporates staff from all levels of the library's operations. Its purpose is to drive library operations in a concerted way across all levels, to analyze potential threats and to maximize opportunities so that Queens Library can continue to serve its customers to the best of its ability, in the present and future, while at the same time being flexible enough to respond to quickly-changing circumstances. The strategic planning team's first job was to define a mission statement, the library's vision and values, and to identify strategic directions from which all other actions flow.

In 1998, a Leadership Team was formed to study goals and directions for the organization as a whole, while simultaneously, multiple Strategic Planning Teams work on specific aspects of the plan.

To further guide the library's planning initiatives, Queens Library periodically has market research surveys conducted by independent research groups. The findings inform communications and service strategies. Summaries of the surveys conducted in 1995 and 2000 may be found on the website.

Governance: The Queens Borough Public Library is an autonomous library system, guided by a 19-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Mayor of the City of New York and the Queens Borough President. The Mayor, the Comptroller, the Public Advocate and the Borough President are ex-officio members.